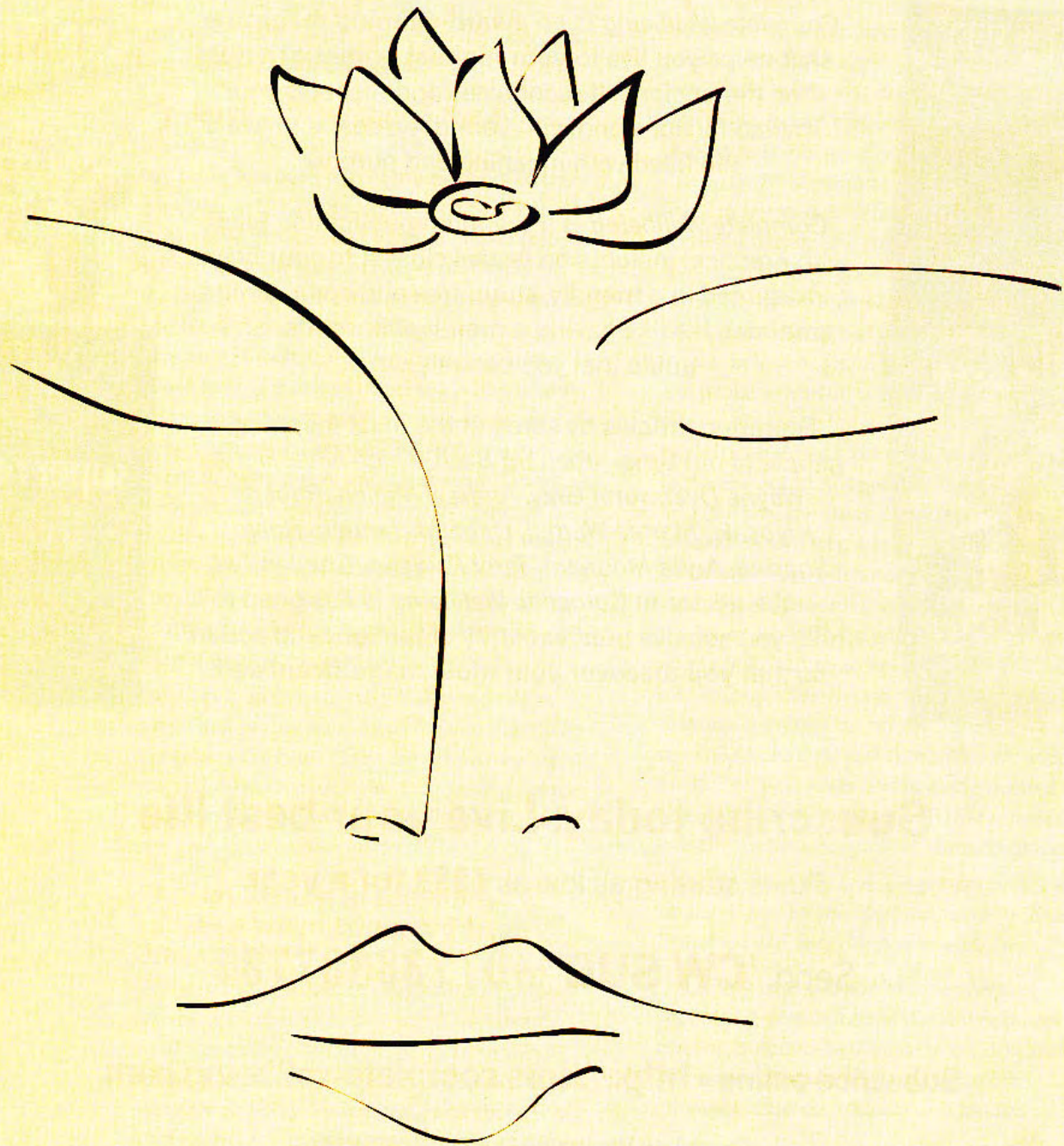


The way of wisdom

A man of wisdom is a man of real depth, says **Osho**



SOCRATES WAS DYING. A disciple asked, "Why are you not afraid of death?" Death was certain, within minutes he would die. The poison to kill him was being prepared. But Socrates said, "How can I be afraid of something which is unknown? I will have to see. When I die, only then can I see. Two possibilities are there. One is that I will die completely, no trace of me will be left. So there will be nobody left to know it, nobody to suffer it. So there is no question about my being worried about it—if this first alternative is going to happen. And the second possibility is that I may continue, only the body will die but the soul will remain. Then too I don't see any point in being worried. If I am to continue, then death is irrelevant. And only these two possibilities exist. I cannot say anything right now about what will happen. I don't know. I don't know yet."

Socrates was a wise man, not a man of knowledge. A man of knowledge would have given a certain answer. Men of knowledge have certain answers, absolute certainty—that is part of their stupidity. In fact, only stupid minds can be certain. Life is such a vast mystery, unfathomable, unknowable; if you are wise you cannot be certain. Wisdom is cautious. Wisdom hesitates. Wisdom is never certain. That's why wisdom can never be confined to a theory.

Wisdom doesn't know

All theories are less than life, all theories are narrow, and life cannot enter into them—life is so vast, so tremendously vast and infinite. A wise man only knows one thing: that he does not know. A man of knowledge knows a thousand and one things and knows that he knows—and therein lies his foolishness. He goes on accumulating facts un-lived by himself: theories, words, philosophies—untouched by his own being. He goes on accumulating them in his memory. He becomes a vast reservoir of knowledge, he becomes an Encyclopedia Britannica—but a dead thing.

The more his memory becomes filled with knowledge the less and less he lives in his being. The more and more he moves into the head, becomes a part, a fragment, the less and less he is joined to the vast being and the universe and existence. He becomes in a way

non-existential. He is no more a part of this existence, alive, radiant, vibrating. He is a frozen phenomenon; he no more flows with life. He is like an iceberg, frozen and stuck somewhere—stuck in the head. Consciousness, when it becomes knowledge, becomes frozen; when consciousness becomes wisdom, it becomes a flow. A wise man lives, lives totally, but knows only one thing—that he doesn't know.

Knowledge is transferable

To learn from a wise man is very difficult, to learn from a man of knowledge is very easy. He can give you all that he knows, he can transfer it very easily, language is enough of a vehicle. All that he has gathered he has gathered through the mind, through language; it can be communicated easily. A man of knowledge becomes a teacher. He can teach you, and he can teach beautifully, things which he has not known at all. Maybe that's why he is not as hesitant as a man who knows. Because when a man knows, he also knows the opposite polarity of life. When a man really understands and knows, he also knows that everything is joined with its opposite, everything is meeting and melting into its opposite. Nothing can be said definitely because the moment you say anything definitely you have stopped its flow, you have made it a frozen fact. It is no more part of the river, it is

an iceberg. Now you can accumulate it in the storehouse of the mind.

A man who is wise is not a teacher—he can be a Master but not a teacher. What is the difference between the two? A teacher is ready to teach—a Master is never ready to teach. A teacher is aggressive, active—a Master is non-aggressive, inactive. A teacher will follow you and force you, so that you can carry his knowledge on your shoulders. A Master waits. You have to snatch from him, you have to partake of him. He will not follow you, he will not force you. He will not even knock at your doors—he will simply wait. You can partake of his being. You can enter his inner emptiness, the inner palace of his being, his inner kingdom, but that is up to you. You will have to do all the work. The Master is only a presence. If you are attracted, you fall into the presence. A teacher calls, a teacher tries, a teacher makes all the effort so that you can understand. A Master simply is there—open of course, not closed, absolutely open for you to come in. But he doesn't make even a gesture, because that gesture may be aggressive, that gesture may force you to come in without your own will. And then it will be bad, then you have been put on a wrong path.

A master does not teach

A Master is silent presence. You can learn from him, but he will not teach. With a teacher you will be a student. There exists a relationship, a two-way relationship. With the Master you can be only a disciple, it is one-way—you have to learn. If you don't learn you don't learn, if you learn you learn. A Master is so happy with his own being he

does not bother. If you learn he blesses you; if you don't learn he also blesses you—he is a blessing, a benediction.

A man of knowledge becomes a teacher and millions of people are attracted towards him, because when you learn something your ego feels strengthened. Very few rare souls are attracted towards a Master because, in fact, with a Master you will have to unlearn, with a Master you will have to die. Your ego will be shattered completely—because only then can you enter into the temple, into the innermost shrine of the Master's being.

A Master is a wise man but his understanding is so profound that you cannot understand it. You can only live it. A Master knows, but he knows in such depth—where opposites meet, where life and death become synonymous, where existence and nonexistence don't mean opposites, where all rivers fall into the ocean—in that depth a Master exists.

It is difficult to understand him because understanding will be superficial and all understanding will be more or less misunderstanding. Don't try to understand him. How can you understand him? How can you understand an infinite phenomenon? You can live it, you can dissolve into it, you can allow it to dissolve into you, that's possible. It is like love: you cannot understand love, mysterious are its ways. You cannot understand it, you cannot pin down what it is. Thousands of definitions exist but love has not been defined yet and it will never be defined. Whenever you define, immediately you feel something is missing. And that something will always be missed, because that something is the depth.

A MAN OF KNOWLEDGE LIVES ON THE CIRCUMFERENCE; A WISE MAN LIVES AT THE CENTRE. THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO REACH A WISE MAN—YOU WILL HAVE TO COME TO YOUR OWN CENTRE

Osho was never born and never died. He only visited this planet earth between 11 December 1931 and 19 January 1990. He was a charismatic and gifted speaker who became the leader of a worldwide new spiritual movement.



A definition cannot carry depth, it can only be on the surface.

Come to your centre

A wise man lives in the depth. A man of knowledge lives on the circumference; a wise man lives at the centre. There is only one way to reach a wise man—you will have to come to your own centre. Centre to centre there is communion with a wise man. Head to head, mind to mind, there is communion with a teacher, the man of knowledge.

The wise man has by and by disappeared from the world. In the West you don't find philosophers, you find only professors of philosophy. This is something absurd. A professor of philosophy is not a philosopher; a professor of philosophy is just a teacher—a man of knowledge but not a wise man—not like Socrates, not like Lao Tzu, not like Buddha. They are not professors. They are not professing anything, they are not teaching anything to anybody. They are just there—like the sun is there, you open your eyes and the darkness disappears; like the flower by the side of the path, you just be with it for a few seconds and the fragrance fills you to your very depth; like a river flowing, you come to it thirsty and your thirst is quenched. They are not professors, they are alive people. They are more alive than anybody else, and then they become more and more mysterious.

Knowledge grows, changes, moves—wisdom is eternal, it is always the same. Whenever you attain it, it is always the same. It is like the sky which remains eternally the same. Seasons come and go: now it is winter, now it is summer, now it is raining, now the rains have disappeared. Trees come and die, generations come and go and the drama of life goes on moving, but the sky remains as it is, eternally the same, eternally new, ever fresh and always old. Wisdom is like the sky.

Wisdom grows with time

Of course knowledge can be taught in the universities, colleges, schools. Wisdom can

never be taught. Nowhere can it be taught. Wisdom has to be imbibed through life, there is no other way. So only an old man can be a wise man. In wisdom the young man can never defeat the old man, but in knowledge he can always defeat him. How can you defeat the old man in wisdom? Wisdom comes through experience; knowledge comes not through experience but through learning. You can cram it in, and if you are a little intelligent, more intelligent than the average, you can know more than your teacher. You can know more than your father, there is no problem about it. Just a little effort on your part is needed. But wisdom—there is no way. It comes by and by through life. If you live and if you live totally, if you live and you live with awareness, only then, drop by drop, does wisdom come into being. It is such a subtle phenomenon! There is no direct way to reach it. Only old people can be wise. That's why whenever there is somebody who is wise and young, in the East we know that he is old, he is ancient.

There is a beautiful story about Lao Tzu that he was born old; when he was born he was eighty-four years of age—he had remained in his mother's womb for eighty-four years. Absurd, unbelievable, but a beautiful story—says something, says something very significant. It says that from his very childhood he was like an old man, so wise he could not be a child. It says something. It is symbolic. It says that when he was a child he had as much wisdom as ordinarily a man of eighty-four would have. He must have been tremendously alert.

If you are very alert then a single experience can give you much. If you are not alert you will go on repeating the same experience and nothing will be gained.

*Excerpted from Absolute Tao.
Courtesy: Osho International Foundation; osho.com*



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